

# UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

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## *The School of Medicine*

DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY

January 21, 1953

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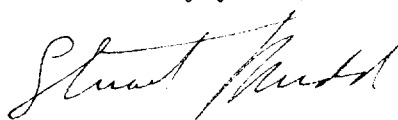
Dear Dr. Lederberg:

Thank you very much indeed for the extremely valuable batch of reprints which crossed my letter in the mail. I appreciate also your willingness to discuss this fascinating problem of scientific communication which, of course, is one with which we all have to be concerned throughout our professional lives.

My feelings are very much influenced by much association with chemists and physicists, and my life-long effort to help biology to ground itself on these more fundamental disciplines. I am sure that many chemists and physicists who could be helpful to us are prevented from being so by the highly special and technical idiom in which much of the biological literature is written. This is perhaps more true of genetics than any other field one could mention. A minor consideration is the sheer man hours that are required even for a biologist to read papers that are so largely expressed in special notation. Obviously, no one can write very much in science without using technical concepts, words, and even notation, to some extent. The chief choice open to the writer is a quantitative one, and I myself have striven to make the maximum use of words which I feel many informed biologists, chemists, or physicists who understand the concepts involved, can understand.

I appreciate also that there is eminent precedence for a quite different approach. I have in mind, for instance, Sir Almoth Wright. Sir Almoth was a classicist and he loved to coin classical words to act, as he said, as messengers for the ideas and phenomena which he was trying to present. In my own humble estimation, if all scientists followed Dr. Wright's path, it would lead to a sort of Tower of Babel, but I am not expecting universal agreement in this view. It is fun to discuss the matter anyway.

Cordially yours,



Stuart Mudd

SM:db